1369

Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

The "Standard's" new list of premiums, made up, of course, with a view to induce people to subscribe to and support the single-tax movement, includes four or five of Talmage's collections of sermons, one or two books by other clergymen, and Harrison's speeches on his recent trip. Now we know what sort of men single-taxers seek to enlist, and how much sense the average so-called single-tax individualist has.

Mr. Boppe, the editor of the "Freidenker," has often criticised Anarchism with a confidence scarcely indicative of ignorance of his subject. His ignorance, however, is now clearly established by his recent enormous blunder in classifying Liberty as an organ of Communism. As may be seen in another column, this blunder has made him a very tempting target for the shafts of Comrade Reitzel's wit. Mr. Boppe has earned the right to hold his tongue regarding Anarchism hereafter.

The Boston "Herald" states that the Pope's encyclical is having an effect upon labor movements wherever the Roman Catholic element largely prevails, and that it has stimulated the effort to establish in many of the great working centres industrial organizations, of which both the wage earners and employers shall be members, and in which they shall coöperate for the promotion of friendly relations with one another. I don't believe a word of it. Nobody has paid the slightest attention to the Pope's flatulent and inconsequential deliverances,—that is, nobody engaged in practical trades-union work. It has had, and will have, no influence whatever. Let the "Herald" give us some facts.

"To celebrate Labor by compelling people to be idle who would prefer to work," says the "Nation," "is one of the notable victories achieved in recent years by the office-holders in the labor unions coöperating with the office-seekers in politics. If this compulsory idleness on the first Monday of September were limited to those who voluntarily put themselves under the rules of the labor unions, it would not be for others to complain; but a legal holiday has the virtue of imposing idleness upon a large part of the community who are quite outside the jurisdiction of Master Workmen and walking delegates." So far the "Nation's" censure meets with my unqualified approval. But its next remark,—that "labor day" was made a legal holiday when boycotting was rampant,—is unintelligent, and shows that the "Nation" understands liberty but little better than the "New Nation," which is in favor of boycotting and also of a legal labor holiday.

If any one still doubts that the Underwoods have adopted Spiritualism, he should read an interview with Mrs. Underwood that lately appeared in the Boston "Budget." She declares that she has learned from the "beautifully worded messages" which she has received that "death is only a transition from one plane of living to another still higher; that upon the ego's progress in love and wisdom depends its rapidity of progress toward higher planes, of which there are very many; that sympathies are the basis of these planes or states of being, but that nowhere are there any harder phases of existence than the physical here. The intelligences that write these messages through my hand say that man has now arrived at a point where communication is more easy from those planes only a little in advance of ours; that each plane has its own mediums among us, and those must be of like spiritual sympathy; therefore we cannot get into rapport with every one we would like to hear from." If this is not Spiritualism, what is it? The "Twentieth Century" may retract its retraction.

Boppe on Mackay.

[Der Arme Teufel.]

A friend has called my attention to the leading article in the "Freidenker" of August 30, entitled: "Bitter Truths and Accusations," which is mainly meant to be a review of Mackay's book, "Die Anarchisten." I am thankful to my friend; for if a man like Boppe aggravates the "lamentable confusion of ideas" which it is the very purpose of Mackay's book to combat, it becomes the duty of even a poor devil who usually gladly pays homage to superior wisdom and thoroughness to raise an interrogation in the mind of the common readers of the "Arme Teufel" and the "Freidenker."

As always, so in this case, Boppe starts with the first commandments of his catechism. To him man without the State is a nonentity; neither in Switzerland nor in the United States has he ever been able to discover the premises for the same; he cannot conceive of human nature without government, and he will not allow even a Mackay to convert him to anything like that. As if Comrade Boppe had ever allowed himself to be converted to anything!

And yet, is it not something of a conversion that Mr. Boppe has at least learned enough about the aims of Anarchism to admit that it does not essentially consist in terror, riot, and revolt?

It is pleasant to note, too, that Mr. Boppe regards as applying to himself also the libels on Anarchism, its thoughtless condemnation and the rage produced by the very word, described by Mackay. "Yes, so it is," he says very naïvely, "of that we too can say something." Why, that sounds exactly as if this Epigone of radicalism were carrying about with him some kind of Anarchism misunderstood by the world! But for the rest, Boppe repeats his irreconcilability to Anarchism *ad nauseam*.

That he would pay his respects to Mackay's sense of justice and creative power as a poet I had expected; but that he reprinted whole passages from the chapter on the "Tragedy of Chicago,"—reprinted them in the "Freidenker,"—of that my friend Mackay can be proud. Of course he does not fail to preface them with the remark that *he* does not share Mackay's "one-sided admiration" for the victims of that tragedy; to *him*, of course, anything so human cannot happen. Too bad that I am compelled to correct *him* of a totally inhuman stupidity (or shall we rather call it criminal carelessness?)

As the reader knows, Mackay demonstrates the complete incompatibility of Anarchism and Communism. Very well! says Boppe. But, he continues: "[illegible] becomes of Communistic Anarchism?" And answer: "Here Benj. R. Tucker and his following can take small pleasure in this demonstration of Mackay! The 'brilliant light,' to which Mackay claims to owe his 'illumination,' has not lighted him in the finding of that truth."

Behold this man, whose intention is to twit, although he is immeasurably ignorant in regard to the relationship here described. Nor has Mr. Boppe learned that the book on which he writes and which he undertakes to criticise is principally devoted to the emancipation from Communism into Anarchism. He does not know that Tucker and Mackay are of one mind in this and all fundamental questions, and that Mackay was essentially helped in his course of development by Tucker's Liberty. He does not know that Tucker and his "following" do not fight anything so relentlessly as Communistic Anarchism; that the condemnation of force under all circumstances [No, not under *all* circumstances, Comrade Reitzel.—EDITOR LIBERTY.] which Mackay has learned of late is quite after Tucker's heart. He does not know that the Communistic Anarchists, with "Freiheit" at the head, refuse to have anything whatever to do with Liberty. All this, which has for years taken place before the eyes of the public, has not existed for Mr. Boppe, and with a very unseemly and sarcastic smile he invents a division, for once to have his little fun, too. Yes, yes, Comrade Boppe, satire may be an arrow that returns upon the archer.

We might indeed find an apology in Boppe's article, but what kind of one! For he explains that he has hitherto only "turned the leaves" of the book. And the man of thoroughness, as which Mr. Boppe mainly figures, writes, judges of a book, of which he has only turned the leaves!! Awful! It is at best only my kind of people who may permit themselves anything like that. However, even if we should accept this apology, the crass ignorance in regard to the position of Liberty towards Communistic Anarchism cannot be explained away; and if in consequence of this "premise" I do not scent any malice in his sarcasm, we are at any rate confronted with a judgment on a matter which he does not understand. But that is called levity, which ill becomes a married man of Mr. Boppe's age.

A Woman's Defence of Women.

To the Editor of Liberty:

To a woman's weak perceptives, it seems as if Tucker & Co. have a monopoly on everything logical or scientific. The brilliant passes they make, in their intellectual tournaments, are wonderfully awe-inspiring to weak minds. I find myself this cool September morning just recovering (were the weather less favorable I should probably not recover) from the overwhelming effects of the superior wisdom displayed on Liberty's first page, August 29. It requires great minds to discover the vast difference between the mental make-up of men and women. I want to ask Mr. Tucker to point out one mental faculty possessed by man that is not also possessed by woman, and *vice versa*. "Women furthermore worship power under all its forms." So do *some* men. I know women who do *not* worship power, or love it or those who wield it. I also know men who do love it, who are ever ready to bend the supple knee in worship. All time and all history have been full of men who were willing to give up all that makes life dear and even life itself at the bidding of the power that rules them, and this devotion has been called patriotism, and very commendable, far from disqualifying them from wielding power or voting it to others. When I first read what Mr. Pentecost said about women being "wives, mothers, sweethearts," &c., I thought it was pretty good, indeed quite brilliant; but now, thanks to Mr. Tucker, I see that it is *very* commonplace, indeed utterly unworthy the attention of scientific men. "The majority of believers are women." This may be true. At the same time there is room for a respectable minority of male believers who earn or *get* the money to build the costly churches and pay the high-salaried preachers (also men) who preach the stuff women are supposed to devote themselves to believing. Why are not the men who are preachers and believers disfranchised? "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." I am not sure this quotation is classical, but think it is true. "But rationalists will see in this fact an objection both to the systems and to the women." I wonder if their objections are potent enough to induce them to run the world without women. Prof. Denslow has already made a move in that direction. He has discovered that the "Mother is no more essential to the origin of life than the cradle or the trundle-bed." We fear science and mechanics will be able to dispense with women as mothers; they won't have us in politics or government; our occupation gone, we may be compelled to seek other fields,—possibly other worlds. The moon, being nearest, seems most available, but there is a *man* in it before us; he is probably a "rationalist" and would have the same "objection" to women. What shall we do? There seems to be but little chance to hope for the best; we *must* prepare for the worst!

MRS. HANNAH J. HUNT.

HALSTEAD, KAN., SEPT. 3, 1891.

[My good correspondent should have employed a man to defend her position. Perhaps he would have made out a case that I should have thought worth answering.—EDITOR LIBERTY.]

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

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Justice and Anarchism. — III.

Having disclosed the weakness of Mr. Spencer's arguments in favor of the limited Archism contemplated by his system of appliances, having demonstrated that the logic of equal freedom cannot be made to justify coercion of non-aggressive individuals, it is hardly necessary to state what the Anarchistic system of appliances is. The right of the non-invasive person to ignore the State being a corollary of equal liberty, it follows that taxation must be voluntary. Enrollment in military service, it is further manifest, cannot be obligatory upon any citizens. Nothing can be enforced save those claims which belong to the individual under the law of justice. And since disputes are liable to arise among the members of a given society upon special applications of the general principle, and since no single individual or body of individuals may undertake to enforce any interpretation of the principle against the will of dissenting parties, it follows that nothing can be enforced but what the whole body of coöperating citizens unanimously agree to be in conformity with equal liberty. If the citizens unanimously agree to abide by the decisions of a jury representing them, the requirements of justice are equally satisfied. That, in fine, is the best instrumentality for the preservation and maintenance of equal liberty which is itself in full harmony with equal liberty.

But it should be remembered that the important practical question now confronting us is not what the best instrumentality is for the maintenance of equal liberty, but what is the best method of securing the practical recognition of equal liberty in our present societies. While arguing against the ethical right of compulsory government to exist at all, Anarchists are aware that non-ethical institutions will be eliminated gradually, one by one, and one at a time. They are ready to coöperate with the individualists in any rational movement against any special abuse or evil, and only ask that no energy shall be wasted and that the most mischievous and harmful elements in the present system be selected for assault.

Resuming the consideration of Mr. Spencer's corollaries, we may now follow his own order. Passing over the right to physical integrity and the rights to free motion and locomotion, which admit of no doubt and the presentation of which by Mr. Spencer is satisfactory (always excepting the qualifications said to be entailed by the need of preserving the maximum of liberty, which qualifications we have seen to be quite without warrant), we come to the right to the uses of natural media, which include the surface of the earth. What is Mr. Spencer's solution of the "vexed" land question?

"If," says Mr. Spencer, "while possessing those ethical sentiments which social discipline has now produced, men stood in possession of a territory not yet individually portioned out, they would no more hesitate to assert equality of their claims to the land than they would hesitate to assert equality of their claims to light and air. But now that long-standing appropriation, continued culture, as well as sales and purchases, have complicated matters, the dictum of absolute ethics . . . . is apt to be denied altogether." Mr. Spencer holds that "the wholesale resumption of the land by the community can be justly effected only by wholesale purchase of it. Were the direct exercise of ownership to be resumed by the community without purchase, the community would take, along with something which is its own, an immensely greater amount of something which is not its own. . . . . We must admit that all which can be claimed for the community is the surface of the country in its original unsubdued state. To all that value given to it by clearing, breaking-up, buildings, etc., constituting nearly all its value, the community has no claim. This value has been given either by personal labor, or by labor paid for, or by ancestral labor; or else the value given to it in such ways has been purchased by legitimately earned money. All this value artificially given vests in existing owners, and cannot without a gigantic robbery be taken from them. If during the many transactions which have brought about existing land-ownership there have been much violence and much fraud, these have been small compared with the violence and the fraud which the community would be guilty of did it take possession, without paying for it, of that artificial value which the labor of nearly two thousand years has given to the land." Furthermore, in entertaining the thought of rectification, the question arises, which are the wronged and which are the wrongers? "It is tacitly assumed," says Mr. Spencer, "that those who now own lands are the posterity of the usurpers, and that those who now have no lands are the posterity of those whose lands were usurped. But this is far from being the case." Those who are now landless are to a considerable extent descendants of the sinners, while the proprietors are to a considerable extent descendants of the sinned against. Finally, "if we are to go back upon the past at all, we must go back upon the past wholly, and take account not only of that which the people at large have lost by private appropriation of land, but also that which they have received in the form of a share of the returns, — that is, we must take account of Poor-Law relief." £500,000,000 would be an underestimate of the total sum received in this form by the poor, and hence "it is manifest that against the claim of the landless may be set off a large claim of the landed — perhaps a larger claim" (for the landless have an equitable claim only to the land in its primitive state, for which £500,000,000 would be a high price.)

The foregoing considerations lead Mr. Spencer to favor individual ownership of land as now maintained. Mr. Spencer adds that, setting aside all financial objections to nationalization, it suffices to remember the inferiority of public administration to private administration to see that ownership by the State would work ill. The vices of officialism would inevitably entail immense evils. So, even if it were possible to rectify the inequitable doings of thousands of years and make an equitable rearrangement, the resulting state of things would be a less desirable one than the present.

Unquestionably the land question is the most difficult with which men anxious to "do justice justly" have to deal. Did men comprehend equal freedom, it would be relatively easy to establish it in all the other relations, since they do not imperatively call for rectification of past misgovernment and injustice. In finance, in commerce, in industry, it is enough to provide for the observation of justice in the future, and to put a period to the career of invasion. But in the matter of land it is unfortunately imperative to rectify past wrongdoing; and this presents serious obstacles. It has been often intimated in these columns that land reform must be subordinated to reform in other relations, and that after equal liberty has been secured in trade and industry (in the widest sense) it will be much less difficult to solve the land question, which, indeed, would largely settle itself under the new conditions. But it must be confessed that Mr. Spencer's manner of handling this grave problem is unworthy of a thinker of his rank. Most of his arguments would be weak even in the mouth of a fifth-rate Tory politician, and they are really undeserving of any serious reply. It will be sufficient to indicate a few of the facts and considerations which Mr. Spencer has overlooked.

In the first place, Mr. Spencer assumes throughout the discussion that there is but one possible alternative to the present system, — namely, State ownership. Of the Anarchistic solution he never seems to have thought. The fact that pure equity points to "occupying ownership" as the title to land, he seems to be unaware of. Yet the only weighty objection to a change in landholding adduced by Mr. Spencer, — the notorious inefficiency of governmental administration, — does not apply to the system advocated by the Anarchists. In the second place, Mr. Spencer calmly and confidently argues from the Bastiat assumption that the artificial value which the land has is the result of the expenditure of labor and capital by the proprietors, evidently mistaking this assumption for an uncontroverted fact. Of the discussion about unearned increments Mr. Spencer takes no cognizance. But everybody is well aware that land steadily rises in value without the least exertion of the proprietor, simply as a result of the labor of others in the particular locality. Is not land held for speculative purposes, and does not that mean that landlords get something to which they are not entitled? The landlords, to be sure, have, to some extent, enhanced the value of the land by their expenditure of capital; but they have been receiving returns in the form of rent. Curiously enough Mr. Spencer forgets this not insignificant item. Besides, that capital which the landlords apply to the land, — where does *it* come from? Mr. Spencer, it is to be feared, has not looked into the question of the origin or cause of interest and profits. Those of us who think that all great fortunes may be traced to monopoly and inequitable privileges, — to violations of equal liberty, — will not consider it a very grave objection to the expropriation of the landlords that they have applied to their lands the capital which legality enabled them to acquire by methods that, ethically considered, are indistinguishable from robbery and theft. They will be apt to think that, if a fresh start should be taken and equal opportunities guaranteed to all under the system of occupying ownership, the landlords would have nothing to complain about. This recognition of the iniquitous character of the antecedents of modern fortunes further helps us in surmounting the obstacle that some of the present landowners are the posterity of the original sinners and some of the landless the descendants of the sinned-against. Small owners would not suffer from the application of the "personal use" principle, while large owners, who have come into possession of the landed property, or the capital with which they purchased the landed property, by means that equal liberty could not sanction, would have no principle to base any protest on. It is with the abolition of land monopoly as it would be in the case of the abolition of slavery. We should not endorse the claim of a man over the person of another on the ground that he was not his original enslaver, but bought him of another slaveholder. The claims of the landowners are not more valid, and the danger to the liberties of men from the principle of land monopoly is not less great.

Mr. Spencer's vain and weak apologies for land monopoly — prompted doubtless by the sense of the complexity and difficulty of the problem of rectification rather than by any solicitude for the comfort of the landlord class — cannot be reconciled with the principle of equal liberty, from which the right of every person to as much land as he personally needs and can use is a clear logical deduction. V. Y.

Rights and Equal Liberty.

To the Editor of Liberty:

In a picket note in No. 194 you say that a word is needed to express the liberties which men enjoy under equal freedom, but you don't like the word "rights" because it has ambiguous meanings; although you admit that the use of the word is correct if the writer and reader adhere to the definition given by Spencer, implying that you agree in the main with Spencer's argument, but differ with him in use of terms. But in the same paragraph you say that equal freedom is a matter of contract. Now, it seems to me that it is not only in the matter of terms that you differ with Spencer, but in the matter of philosophy; because, if Spencer has proven anything in his work, "Justice," it is that the law of equal liberty is *not* a matter of contract. He shows that the law of equal liberty is, under one aspect, an immediate dictum of the human consciousness after it has been subject to the discipline of prolonged social life, — that the sentiment of justice has naturally arisen from converse with the conditions of associative life; and that, under another aspect, it is a belief deducible from the conditions of life at large as well as from those of social life. In a picket note in No. 189, you indorse this view, it seems to me; consequently, I am at a loss to know what you mean by saying that equal freedom is a matter of contract. When contracted? And by whom? And if the contract has not yet been entered into, do you mean that there will be no law of equal liberty until the contract is made, signed, and deposited?

To say that there is no right (in the sense that Spencer uses the word) but might, is like saying that there is no justice but force. I don't like the word "rights," but, until another word is coined, we shall have to use it in its scientific sense, prefixed perhaps by the adjective social. But whatever word we use, it will be used to express a corollary of equal liberty, and so I would like to have you explain what you mean by saying that equal liberty is a matter of contract.

A. H. Simpson.

Cheerfully I do so. But first I must point out to Mr. Simpson that I did not say that Spencer's use of the word rights is *correct* if writer and reader adhere. On the contrary, my paragraph was written expressly to show that it is incorrect. I simply said that, on condition of the adherence of the writer and reader thereto, Spencer's use of the word is "comparatively unobjectionable." There is a wide difference here. If I determine to call black all those things which people generally call white, and *vice versa*, and if I announce this determination to Mr. Simpson, and if Mr. Simpson hears me and remembers what I say, and if I remember it myself and stick to it, then no confusion of thought regarding colors will arise between Mr. Simpson and me in consequence of my inversion of the usual terminology, and hence this inversion will be "comparatively unobjectionable"; but will it be *correct?* I think that Mr. Simpson will perceive this distinction without further elucidation. It seems to me that he ought to have perceived it earlier, for, to make my meaning plain, I was careful to say that Spencer's use of the word rights is comparatively unobjectionable on certain conditions, *like any use of any word*. Furthermore, this phrase clearly excludes from my remark any implication that I agree with Spencer's position, though differing as to terms.

At the present moment, in answer to Mr. Simpson, there is no occasion for me to say whether I agree with Spencer's position or not. I need only to point out that there is no inconsistency between my statement that equal liberty is a matter of contract, on the one hand, and, on the other, Spencer's position (as stated by Mr. Simpson) that the law of equal liberty is not a matter of contract, together with my own declaration in No. 189 that the law of equal liberty is a generalization from a series of social phenomena. Equal liberty and the law of equal liberty are two very different things. The law of equal liberty is simply a statement of the inference, drawn from numerous observations, that equal liberty is the fundamental essential to stable social life. This is a scientific statement of fact, the truth of which cannot be confirmed or altered by any contract whatsoever. Equal liberty itself, however, is not a statement of fact, but a condition, — a condition which does not exist until men create it by contract or by tacit consent.

It follows from the law of equal liberty that men who want a stable social life must first adopt equal liberty as a condition, but it does not follow that all men are under obligations to each other, — that is, that all men have rights. Robin Hood was not bound by Magna Charta, and the signers of Magna Charta, though under obligations to each other which they themselves had created, had no rights which Robin Hood was bound to respect.

From equal liberty itself, however, it follows that those who adopt it thereby enjoy as a consequence certain privileges and immunities. These privileges and immunities Mr. Spencer terms rights. I deem this use of the word improper, because to me and to people generally the word rights carries the idea of a prerogative superior to contract as distinguished from a privilege, power, or immunity resulting from contract.

It is true that "to say there is no right (in the sense that Spencer uses the word) but might is like saying there is no justice but force." But when I said that there are no rights but mights, I was not using the word in Spencer's sense, but expressly insisting upon my own and the common use.

If those who insist on using the word in Spencer's sense will qualify it with the adjective social, they will, to be sure, exercise a wise precaution which will help to avoid confusion; but to say that this sense of the word, even so qualified, is the scientific sense is to beg the question.

T.

Spencer's American Critics.

The reception of Mr. Spencer's "Justice" by the literary critics and reviewers of this country is not calculated to inspire one with respect for them. The reviews of "Justice" in the dailies thus far have been distinguished by the total absence of any symptom of scientific thought, intelligence, or ability. The literary papers have attempted critical treatment, and their failure has been strikingly complete. The New York "Critic," for instance, expresses disappointment at Mr. Spencer's view and definition of justice. "It is merely legal justice, and not the moral virtue which the Greeks designated by that name," sadly remarks the critic of the "Critic," thereby disclosing lamentable ignorance of Mr. Spencer's purpose, meaning, and achievement. The Greek "justice," it is implied, was superior to Mr. Spencer's, while in truth it was nothing but a word. The "Critic" further objects that the formula is of no value in the relations of parents to children, and thinks the distinction between the ethics of the family and the ethics of the State entirely arbitrary. "That morality should be one thing in the family and another thing in the State is contrary to the very idea of morality," we are told. No better comment upon this bald assertion can be made than that which Mr. Spencer himself aptly puts in the following sentence: "The only justification for the analogy between parent and child and government and people is the childishness of the people who entertain the analogy." The Boston "Literary World" prints a review of "Justice" which I find to be a mere abbreviated copy of an article (doubtless by the same writer) in the "Christian Register." The theological bias is easily detected in the criticism upon the Spencerian method. The critic says: "Mr. Spencer follows his usual method of starting from the lowest forms of animal life and working his way upward into human society. In reading this book we have been struck more forcibly than ever before with the essential pedantry and futility of this much-vaunted method. As a matter of fact, what Mr. Spencer finds in the lower animals he brings there from his previous knowledge of man. So far from shedding light upon the relations of mankind to society, these lower forms and methods of animal life only assume a species of reasonableness to us from the fact that we can interpret them from our previous experience. In a book treating of the State so largely as 'Justice' does, the proper fields to resort to are history and the present life of mankind." Do we not interpret history from our "previous experience"? The critic's logic would compel him to the absurdity that it is unprofitable to study anything but our feelings and cognitions at the precise moment a problem is presented for solution, since the past states of consciousness are interpreted from our present experience. The critic does not perceive that the question is not as to *how* we come to understand animal life, but whether we *do* understand it. If we do, the importance of the facts gathered from animal life must be manifest. The critic concludes by questioning whether Mr. Spencer's opposition to free education and public libraries is consonant with his formula of justice. I should like to see the critic attempt to construct a syllogism. The logic of a man who thinks compulsory education and free libraries may be deduced from equal liberty must be very peculiar. The critic is good enough to advise Mr. Spencer to study the American experience in the matter of free education and libraries.

V. Y.

What Is Individualism?

[To-day.]

The "Economist," a Cincinnati monthly paper, objects to the definition of Socialism as "State ownership of the means of production and exchange," on the ground that this definition carries the implication that individualism, the doctrine antithetical to Socialism, opposes State ownership of any means of production and exchange; which implied definition of individualism the "Economist" repudiates as utterly wrong. Its own notion is that individualism is not incompatible with State ownership of *certain* instruments of production and exchange; and hence its natural preference for a definition of Socialism as "State ownership of *all* the instruments, etc.," with emphasis on the "all."

No one really familiar with Socialist tenets and doctrines will be disposed to question the correctness of the "Economist's" definition of Socialism. Indeed, the frankness with which the Socialists emphasize the "all," in the above definition, leaves nothing to be desired, and renders misapprehension inexcusable. Socialists detest competition, and do not hesitate to avow their determination to suppress it completely and thoroughly. But with due respect to the individual opinion of the "Economist," its understanding of individualism is decidedly imperfect and superficial. The positiveness and assurance with which its strictures upon consistent individualists are delivered do not add to their strength or validity. Before correcting the "Economist's" misstatements, its position should be made clear. The sub joined extracts will accomplish that end.

There are, indeed, three well-marked schools of thought: first, the *laissez faire*, composed of those who would make the government merely a police force; second, those who would have it undertake such lines of business as experience shows can be much better managed by public than by private enterprise, and under general regulations compel all private business to be conducted in a way that will not interfere with the highest interests of the whole people; and third, the Socialists, who destroy all individual enterprise, prohibit the individual from engaging in business, and have everything done by the State. The difference between the last two schools is a hundred times as great as between the second and the first. It would be as great a mistake to call the second Socialists as to class them with the *laissez faire* school.

As in other instances, extremes meet. Socialists and men of the *laissez faire* school unite in the claim that everything which is not *laissez faire* is Socialism. The former wish to gain adherents by representing that the difference is only one of degree. The *laissez faire* school hope to prevent any further extension of government powers by crying "Socialism!" . . . Now the great mass of common-sense men, who are neither Socialists nor in favor of letting everything alone until it goes to destruction, need to define their position. They must not allow themselves to be classed with Socialists, Christian or any other kind. They are to say that, while we do not believe in unnecessary interference with private business, we do not intend to let employers alone who work children under ten years of age in factories. We do not intend to let the father alone who is breaking down the health of his child, to throw it, when a man, a burden on society. We do not intend to let a corporation alone that is unduly oppressive to the people. We propose to move carefully, but we have no hesitation in giving the control of any business, like the post-office, to the government when there is good reason to believe it will be for the best interests of the people. They should show that none of these things are in any way related to Socialism. . . . When the mass of the people understand that the highest individualism does not prevent the government's undertaking anything which is shown to be for the best interests of the public, does not prevent regulations for the humane treatment of children, or those designed to secure their education, the converts to Socialism can never become numerous enough to enslave society.

For the great mass of common-sense men to define their position and put themselves in evidence, is always in order. The question of immediate interest, however, is not as to what the position of common-sense is, but as to the relative merit of that position and the position of scientific men. The familiar eulogies of common-sense are uncommon nonsense in so far as they imply contempt for scientific principles. We are not to go to common-sense men for a precise and clear definition of individualism. To furnish this is the function of the sociologist, from whom it behooves common-sense men to learn to amend their nebulous beliefs and organize their scattered knowledge. So the question recurs as to what individualism is. Briefly, individualism is a system of politics which recognizes in the principle of equal liberty the test of all proposals and measures intended to limit the sphere of private activity. The individualists are those who insist on obedience to the equal-liberty principle, and who regard all governmental acts inconsistent with the principle as bad and mischievous, wrong and inexpedient. The difference between this view and that of the "Economist" may be summarized thus: We say that everything which consists with equal liberty is "for the best interests of the pub-

1372

lic"; while the "Economist" seems to imply that everything which is to the best interest of the public is consistent with individualism, which, no doubt, is a truism to individualists, but which remains worthless and meaningless as long as no definite and scientific criterion of "the public good" is advanced. To be sure, the "Economist" proposes to be guided by "experience," and speaks of the government doing only that which "is shown" to be for the best interests of the public; but every meddlesome "reformer" and scheming politician glibly talks about "experience," without comprehending the real import of the term. The Socialists are perfectly sure that competition has been utterly discredited by experience, and that compulsory coöperation has been "shown" to be conducive to social happiness. Protectionists are equally positive that experience has fully established the necessity of high tariff. What these good people forget, or are ignorant of, is that if experience establishes anything, it establishes a general fact or principle in the light of which subsequent problems must be considered and solved. If the experience of a period of ten years is valuable,—and it is better than no experience at all,—how much more valuable is the experience of centuries, of societies, of races? The individualists believe that the law of equal liberty, which can be established deductively, has been abundantly supported by induction. If this is true, then the logical deductions of the law must be accepted as safer supports for policies than opinions alleged to be based on the experiences of certain narrow existences. Equal liberty condemns compulsory education, postal monopoly, and the other pieces of legislative iniquity which the "Economist" holds to be "for the best interests of the people," and *therefore* compatible with individualism. Passing over the fact that there are many persons whose own experience has convinced them that these things are curses rather than blessings, and noting only the fact that the "Economist's" notion is opposed to the law of equal liberty, it becomes necessary to deny it any title to speak in the name of individualism, which stands squarely on, and finds its reason for being in, that law. Individualism, we repeat, seeks to enforce the law of equal liberty, and pays no attention to surface appearances. Anything repugnant to equal liberty, whether apparently a blessing or a curse, is denounced as State Socialism or Nationalism.

Labor Day.

[Detroit News.]

This is Labor day. The unions will march and the bands will play, the grand marshals will bestride their fiery truck horses, and the enthusiasm of the hour will be intense. For the moment the well wisher of the working-people will ride upon the wave of hope that at last they are beginning to get awake to their real interests, and that under every hat that marches today is the idea that liberty is the fundamental principle of progress. But this will soon disappear when these same gallant marchers are seen at the polls struggling for the advancement of less liberty, struggling for the era when the individual worker shall be absolutely the child of the State, and when his own self-reliant nature will be cramped and his free action hampered by rules laid down by authority. If every man that marches in the ranks of labor today was determined to advance intelligently, scientifically, the real interests of the toiling masses, and destroy the barriers that keep the worker from the natural means of employment and from exchanging his products with whomsoever he wills, it would be but a few years before labor would reach the highest point it can reach. But from the light of the past the future is gloomy still.

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